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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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November 29, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: BRENT SCOWCROFT

The Secretary asked that I pass the following report to you.

"This will recap my final substantive meeting with the Chinese on Thanksgiving Day. I met with Teng Hsiao-p'ing and Ch'iao Kuan-hua in the Great Hall of the People for a two-hour wrap-up session which was perhaps the most interesting meeting of the trip. I had laid out our position on international issues and normalization the first day and Teng had responded the second day. This final meeting covered loose ends, went into more depth on a few issues, and afforded both sides an opportunity to make closing philosophical commentaries. The basic elements were, once again, Chinese preoccupation with Soviet hegemony; a mutual agreement to leave the normalization issue where it is now with our studying possible formulas; and the philosophic inconsistency of the Chinese positions on Third World issues.

"I began the meeting by running over some miscellaneous issues:

"-- On the Middle East, I detailed further our military assistance programs as well as the prospects for diplomatic progress. I said that we foresaw negotiating possibilities on the Egyptian-Israeli front but would be working more quietly behind the scenes until negotiations were virtually completed. This would allow us to deflect Soviet pressure on the Arabs; we hope to make significant progress before Brezhnev visits Cairo but not complete negotiations until after his visit so that Egypt would have to be reasonable.

"-- I underlined the important strategic role that the Shah of Iran could play and said that I thought he was prepared to establish closer relations with Peking. I also noted some growing Iraqi dissatisfaction with Moscow.

"-- As I have done on my previous visits, I brought up the subject of our MIA personnel in or near China and as a result of Vietnam.

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I said that we would appreciate any new information that they might have as well as the return of any remains; our Liaison Office would be giving them specific information on a few cases. They said they had no new information and would let us know if anything developed. This will be helpful with the concerned families. I also asked the Chinese to nudge Hanoi on our MIA's in Vietnam, but I seriously doubt that they will do anything.

"-- I then warned of serious consequences if North Vietnam were to launch a major offensive, citing their violations and recent preparations. I noted that Thieu had made an offer to negotiate on all the political aspects of the Paris peace agreements. Teng stonewalled us on this issue, saying that both the South Vietnamese and we were violating the Paris peace agreement and that we were still bogged down in Vietnam with our military assistance. I do not believe they want Hanoi to heat things up, however.

"-- On bilateral matters which had been discussed in separate counterpart talks, I said that we would try and find a new legal formula to solve the last significant issue in the claims/assets problem which is complicating our trade with the PRC. I noted the symbolic importance of our bilateral exchange program and suggested that there be more balance as well as variety. I also gave a boost to Congressional visits. I said that we favored the visit of Senator Mansfield to the PRC which would begin on December 7 for three weeks, but he was not a spokesman of U.S. foreign policy. I was thinking particularly of Cambodia, where Mansfield has a special interest and relationship with Sihanouk. Teng assured me that the Chinese distinguished between the individual views of Congressmen and official U.S. policy.

"-- On normalization, I stressed the importance of some statement about a peaceful settlement on the Taiwan issue and said that we would think over the various principles that had been discussed on this trip to see whether further progress could be made. I indicated that we would continue the gradual reduction of our presence on Taiwan in any event.

"Teng professed Chinese lack of interest in a gradual process and said that they would prefer a brisk solution. However, if the U.S. were not ready to meet Chinese principles, Peking could wait. They did wish to solve this question, he said, but only in accordance with their principles. There was some further discussion during which we agreed that no further progress could be made during this trip, but that we would think the matter over further.

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"Teng then launched into a philosophical discussion of familiar Chinese themes, perhaps under Mao's instructions. He stressed that the world is in great turmoil and that one had to be prepared for eventual war. He then stressed that the initial Soviet threat was against the West rather than China and said that the "polar bear" was after us. He said that they were ready for war and were not afraid of it. I again pointed out that whether the initial attack was against the West or the East, the ultimate danger remained the same.

"We then had an exchange on the stepped-up Chinese rhetorical attack on us on Third World issues. I had hit him hard on this previously and he seemed defensive. I pointed out that it was inconsistent for the Chinese to want us to have an active foreign policy in order to counter Moscow, while at the same time China attacked us publicly in such areas as the Middle East, where we are trying to erode Soviet influence, and the energy situation, whose weakening of the West could not be in China's interest. In short, I said the Chinese should make sure that their rhetorical cannons did not hit their own fortifications. I emphasized the importance of U.S. leadership; the need for close cooperation with Europe and Japan who otherwise would be demoralized; and our strategy in such areas as the Middle East and Cyprus.

"We then closed on a cordial note with both sides agreeing that the exchanges had been very helpful and candid, and the trip productive. It was clear to both of us that despite our philosophic differences, which we have always acknowledged, we can work together on many international issues of primary concern.

"That evening I hosted a return banquet at the Great Hall of the People. The Foreign Minister's toast, like the Chinese toast last year at the return banquet, was brief and somewhere between correct and friendly. I tailored my own remarks accordingly, giving them a modest upbeat quality. After dinner we worked out, without difficulty, the brief communiqué announcing your trip to the PRC. We had prepared a longer draft similar to the one used on last year's trip, but it would have essentially repeated Shanghai Communique principles and further plans for trade and exchanges, etc. The Chinese suggested that we should have a brief dramatic announcement of your trip whose importance would speak for itself, rather than cluttering up the text with reiterating of past statements. I agreed with the Chinese view, which I think was correct, and merely modified their text to give a positive description of our conversations and state the unchanged commitment to normalization by both sides.

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"Friday we visited Soochow with its exquisite gardens and canals, full of beautiful proportions and great variety of perspective. It was a balmy day, the gardens were tranquil and everyone on both sides loosened up amidst great cordiality. It was a warm and very pleasant personal ending to the visit.

"I will be sending you further analyses of the trip's significance, although I have already reported the main substantive themes. I will also discuss some of the more sensitive aspects with you personally."

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